Amendments to the Claims: This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) ~~Stuffing~~A stuffing/dosing machine ~~comprising~~ having a tilting hopper, ~~of the type~~the machine comprising:

a tilting hopper ~~(1)~~, that receives the material to be stuffed/dosed, provided with a top opening ~~(2)~~ having a hermetic cover ~~(3)~~ and a narrowed base ~~(4)~~ associated with an antechamber ~~(5)~~ that leads to the inlet of at least one stuffing chamber ~~(6)~~ connected to an outlet duct ~~(8)~~ via a connection ensemble~~:~~;

at least one piston ~~(9)~~ driven by driving means ~~(10)~~ to perform a stroke covering a first section in said antechamber ~~(5)~~ and a second section in said stuffing chamber ~~(6)~~, of which there is at least one; ~~and~~

means for stirring said material to be stuffed/dosed that is in said hopper ~~(1)~~ and drive it towards the said antechamber ~~(5),~~; and

~~characterized in that~~ an ensemble comprising the hopper ~~(1)~~, ~~its~~the hermetic cover ~~(3)~~, and ~~its~~the narrowed base ~~(4)~~ ~~forms~~ forming a first structural unit that can pivot around an articulation ~~(11)~~ between a first position, or operative position, in which a bottom mouthpiece ~~(4a)~~ of the narrowed base ~~(4)~~ of the hopper ~~(1)~~ is hermetically positioned in a top mouthpiece ~~(5a)~~ of the antechamber ~~(5)~~, and a second position, or cleaning and maintenance position, in which said bottom mouthpiece ~~(4a)~~ of the narrowed base ~~(4)~~ of the hopper ~~(1)~~ is separated from said top mouthpiece ~~(5a)~~ of the antechamber ~~(5)~~ to a sufficient degree to enable easy access to both mouthpieces ~~(4a, 5a)~~.

2. (Currently Amended) ~~Machine~~The machine, according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein another ensemble comprising the antechamber ~~(5)~~, the stuffing chamber ~~(6)~~, the said piston ~~(9)~~ and its driving means ~~(10)~~ forms a second structural unit that can pivot around an articulation ~~(13)~~ between a first position, or operative position, in which a bottom mouthpiece of the stuffing chamber ~~(6)~~ is hermetically positioned in a top mouthpiece of said connection ensemble to the outlet duct ~~(8)~~, and a second position, or cleaning and maintenance position, in which said bottom mouthpiece of the stuffing chamber ~~(6)~~ is separated from said top

mouthpiece of the connection ensemble to the outlet duct ~~(8)~~ in a sufficient degree to enable easy access to both mouthpieces.

3. (Currently Amended) ~~Machine~~The machine, according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein ~~it~~ the machine ~~-~~ comprises two of said stuffing-dosing chambers ~~(6)~~, that are parallel to one another, with their inlets in said antechamber ~~(5)~~ and with their outlets connected to respective inlets of an alternative valve ~~(7)~~ coupled to said outlet duct ~~(8)~~, which is common to both stuffing-dosing chambers ~~(6)~~, with two of said pistons ~~(9)~~ being arranged parallel to one another, and driven independently by said driving means ~~(10)~~ to perform respective strokes covering a first section in said antechamber ~~(5)~~ and a second section in one of the corresponding stuffing-dosing chambers ~~(6)~~.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~Machine~~The machine, according to claim 3, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein another ensemble comprising the antechamber ~~(5)~~, the two stuffing-dosing chambers ~~(6)~~, the said two pistons ~~(9)~~ and their driving means ~~(10)~~ forms a second structural unit that can pivot around an articulation ~~(13)~~ between a first position, or operative position, in which bottom mouthpieces ~~(6a)~~ of the stuffing-dosing chambers ~~(6)~~ are hermetically positioned in top inlet mouthpieces ~~(7a)~~ of said alternative valve ~~(7)~~, and a second position, or cleaning and maintenance position, in which said bottom mouthpieces ~~(6a)~~ of the stuffing-dosing chambers ~~(6)~~ are separated from said top inlet mouthpieces ~~(7a)~~ of the alternative valve ~~(7)~~ to a sufficient degree to enable easy access to both mouthpieces ~~(6a, 7a)~~.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~Machine~~The machine, according to claim 4, ~~characterized in that,~~ wherein said top inlet mouthpieces ~~(7a)~~ of the alternative valve ~~(7)~~, the valve proper ~~(7)~~ and the common outlet duct ~~(8)~~ are integrated in a frame ~~(12)~~, which forms a fixed body of the machine.

6. (Currently Amended) ~~Machine~~The machine, according to claim 5, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said articulation ~~(13)~~ connects a raised point of said frame ~~(12)~~, near the top inlet mouthpieces ~~(7a)~~ of the alternative valve ~~(7)~~, to a point of a support ~~(38)~~ attached to said second structural unit and located near the mouthpiece ~~(6a)~~.

7. (Currently Amended) ~~Machine~~The machine, according to claim 1 ~~or 3~~, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said articulation ~~(11)~~ connects a raised point of said frame ~~(12)~~, which forms a fixed body of the machine, to a point of a support ~~(37)~~ attached to said first structural unit and located at a level below the mouthpiece ~~(4a)~~.

8. (Currently Amended) ~~Machine~~The machine, according to ~~claims~~claim 1 ~~or 4~~, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said hermetic seat between the mouthpieces ~~(4a and 5a, 6a and 7a)~~ is obtained by respective strips placed around the mouthpieces and which, in their corresponding operative positions, back onto one another, trapping an elastic sealing gasket.

9. (Currently Amended) ~~Machine~~The machine, according to claim 4, ~~characterized in that it comprises~~ further comprising elastic end stops ~~(22)~~ arranged around the bottom mouthpiece ~~(4a)~~ of the narrowed base ~~(4)~~ of the hopper ~~(1)~~ to abut against surfaces adjacent to the top mouthpiece ~~(5a)~~ of the antechamber ~~(5)~~ and consequently cushion the seat between both mouthpieces ~~(4a, 5a)~~.

10. (Currently Amended) ~~Machine~~The machine, according to claim 9, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein each of said elastic end stops ~~(22)~~ comprises a captive pin that can slide against the strength of elastic means and ends in a contact end stop.

11. (Currently Amended) ~~Machine~~The machine, according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that it comprises~~ further comprising driving means ~~(25)~~ for making said first structural unit or ensemble containing the hopper, cover and narrowed bottom ~~(1, 2, 3)~~ pivot between said first and second positions.

12. (Currently Amended) ~~Machine~~The machine, according to claim 4, ~~characterized in that it comprises~~ further comprising driving means ~~(26)~~ for making said second structural unit or ensemble containing the antechamber, the stuffing-dosing chambers, pistons and their driving means ~~(5, 6, 9, 10)~~ pivot between said first and second positions.

13. (Currently Amended) ~~Machine~~The machine, according to claim 11 ~~or 12~~, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said driving means (10, 25, 26) comprises at least one fluid dynamic cylinder.

14. (Currently Amended) ~~Machine~~The machine, according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said means for stirring and driving the material to be stuffed/dosed, which is contained in said hopper ~~(1)~~, towards said antechamber ~~(5)~~ are associated with said cover ~~(3)~~ and comprise a screw feeder ~~(14)~~ or spiral mounted on a shaft ~~(15)~~ supported on the inside of the cover ~~(3)~~, said shaft ~~(15)~~ extending through the cover ~~(3)~~ via an opening that is sealed hermetically in an appropriate fashion and being driven by driving means ~~(16)~~ attached to the outside part of the cover ~~(3)~~.

15. (Currently Amended) ~~Machine~~The machine, according to claim 3, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said means for stirring and driving the material to be stuffed/dosed, which is contained in said hopper ~~(1)~~, towards said antechamber ~~(5)~~ are associated with said cover ~~(3)~~.

16. (Currently Amended) ~~Machine~~The machine, according to claim 15, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the means for stirring and driving the material to be stuffed/dosed comprises a screw feeder ~~(14)~~ or spiral mounted on a shaft ~~(15)~~ supported on the inside of the cover ~~(3)~~, said shaft ~~(15)~~ extending through the cover ~~(3)~~ via an opening that is sealed hermetically in an appropriate fashion and being driven by driving means ~~(16)~~ attached to the outside part of the cover ~~(3)~~.

17. (Currently Amended) ~~Machine~~The machine, according to claim 16, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the hopper ~~(1)~~ has a substantially conical part ~~(41)~~ adjacent to the narrowed base ~~(4)~~ and the shape of said screw feeder ~~(14)~~ is adapted so that an outer edge thereof remains near the wall of said substantially conical part ~~(41)~~ when the cover ~~(3)~~ is closed.

18. (Currently Amended) ~~Machine~~The machine, according to claim 16, ~~characterized in that~~wherein said driving means ~~(16)~~ ~~comprise~~comprises an electric or fluid dynamic motor ~~(16)~~ connected to the shaft ~~(15)~~ by means of a reducer transmission ~~(16a)~~.

19. (Currently Amended) ~~Machine~~The machine, according to claim 16, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the cover ~~(3)~~ is connected to the hopper ~~(1)~~ by means of an articulation ~~(17)~~, leaving the axis of said articulation ~~(17)~~ in a substantially vertical position when the ~~said~~ first structural unit, or ensemble containing the hopper, cover and narrowed base ~~(1, 2, 3)~~ is in the second position or cleaning and maintenance position.

20. (Currently Amended) ~~Machine~~The machine, according to claim 1~~, characterized in that~~wherein said hopper ~~(1)~~ comprises ~~and~~ an inlet ~~(18)~~ of material to be stuffed/dosed through a side wall of the hopper ~~(1)~~, with said inlet being connected on the outside to a supply source of material to be vacuum formed/dosed by means of a flexible conduit ~~(42)~~.

21. (Currently Amended) ~~Machine~~The machine, according to claim 20, ~~characterized in that~~wherein said inlet ~~(18)~~ comprises, inside the hopper ~~(1)~~, an outlet mouthpiece ~~(19)~~ opposite a seal ~~(20)~~ mounted on a stem that is supported on the inside part of the cover ~~(3)~~ and driven through the cover ~~(3)~~ via driving means ~~(21)~~ that are attached to the outside thereof.

22. (Currently Amended) ~~Machine~~The machine, according to claim 4, ~~characterized in that it comprises~~further comprising electronic control means that control the driving means ~~(10)~~ of the pistons ~~(9)~~ so that the latter perform their strokes in an alternate manner, and said alternative valve ~~(7)~~ is connected to driving means that are also controlled by said electronic control means to alternatively connect the outlet of each stuffing chamber ~~(6)~~ to said common outlet duct ~~(8)~~ in a way that is synchronized with the driving of the pistons ~~(9)~~.

23. (Currently Amended) ~~Machine~~The machine, according to claim 22, ~~characterized in that~~wherein said electronic control means are capable of controlling the speed and the movement of the strokes of the pistons ~~(9)~~ to provide a continuous flow of material through the common outlet duct ~~(8)~~ or to perform short discrete stops between ~~partials~~spartial strokes, complete strokes or groups of strokes in order to provide an interrupted flow of dosed portions of material through the common outlet duct ~~(8)~~.

24. (Currently Amended) ~~Machine~~The machine, according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that it comprises~~further comprising detection means for controlling the level of material to be stuffed/dosed inside the hopper ~~(1)~~.

25. (New) The machine, according to claim 3, wherein said articulation connects a raised point of said frame, which forms a fixed body of the machine, to a point of a support attached to said first structural unit and located at a level below the mouthpiece.

26. (New) The machine, according to claim 4, wherein said hermetic seat between the mouthpieces is obtained by respective strips placed around the mouthpieces and which, in their corresponding operative positions, back onto one another, trapping an elastic sealing gasket.

27. (New) The machine, according to claim 12, wherein said driving means comprises at lease one fluid dynamic cylinder.